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The Challenges and Triumphs of Democracy in the 21st century.

Outline:

(1)

Introduction:

Thesis Statement: The 21st century has witnessed both triumphs and challenges in democracy. Enhanced political participation, transparency and accountability, and digitalization of democracy ^{among the} are main triumphs of democracy. On the other hand, the main challenges are mass manipulation and prevalence of controlled democracies.

(2) Triumphs of democracy in the 21st century

- (a) Increased political awareness and inclusive public participation
- (b) Enhanced freedom of expression for marginalized communities
- (c) Greater acceptance to diversity and dissent
- (d) Gender equality and women's political participation
- (e) Enhanced transparency and accountability
- (f) Digitalization of democracy: role of social media in triumph of democracy

(3). Challenges of democracy in the 21st century

- (a). Prevalence of controlled democracies in the developing countries
 - (b). Public propaganda and mass manipulation
 - (c). Surveillance and control on freedom of expression
 - (d). Barriers in women's political participation
 - (e). Hate speech and social polarization
 - (f). Social media exacerbating democratic challenges
- (4). A comparative democratic analysis between developed and developing countries.
- (5). An analysis of Pakistan's democracy: triumphs and challenges
- (6). Conclusion

In the 21st century, the democratic governance has emerged as the most suitable form of governance. The 21st century has been witnessing both consolidation and weakening of democracy in multiple dimensions. The triumphs of democracy can be validated from inclusive public participation in governance, enhanced freedom of expression for marginalized communities, greater acceptance to diversity and dissent, increasing role of women in political domain, enhanced transparency and accountability, and digitalization of democracy which embodies the true democratic spirit. However, a number of ^{democratic} challenges have also emerged in the 21st century. These challenges include, but not limited to prevalence of controlled democracies in the developing world, public propaganda and mass manipulation barriers in women's political participation, and increased hate speech resulting in political polarization. A comparative analysis of developed and developing democracies reflect that democratic triumphs can mainly be attributed to developed countries, while

challenges are more relevant for developing countries. An analysis of Pakistan's democracy demonstrates that there are more challenges to democracy with few triumphs.

Without an iota of doubt, the 21st century has witnessed substantial triumphs that have contributed to consolidation of democracy. One of the main triumphs is increased political awareness and inclusive public participation. Social media has played an important role in raising political awareness among masses. **Twitter** and **Teer Gas** is a renowned book that explores how political participation has increased in the 21st century due to development of social media platforms, like Twitter. Public participation is the essence of democracy which has increased in the 21st century.

Another factor contributing to triumph of democracy in the 21st century is enhanced freedom of expression. Freedom of expression is a fundamental democratic right which has enhanced in the

21st century due to evolution of social media. John Stuart Mill in his book "On Liberty" affirms that freedom of speech has significantly enhanced in the modern age of social media. Even the people from marginalized communities can voice their grievances, reflecting the true spirit of democracy.

Similarly, the 21st century has seen greater acceptance for democracy a diversity and dissent. Equal rights for all citizens is an essential democratic principle. The world of the 21st century is interconnected, and therefore values diverse perspectives. There is a famous book, called "Why Deliberative Democracy?" which highlights the significance of diversity and dissent in democracy, and how the modern era is transitioning towards peaceful dissent.

The triumph of democracy can largely be attributed to rising gender equality and growing women political participation. Women participation in politics has led to consolidation of democratic values of inclusive

participation and equal rights for all citizens. The book, "**Women, Power, and Politics**," highlights the rising role of women in politics, not just as voters, but also as representatives and leaders.

Women's political representation is central to democracy as it enables marginalized genders to voice their concerns in the legislation and governance.

Women's inclusive participation has played an important role in consolidating democracy.

One of the prominent areas where democratic triumph is apparently visible is transparency and accountability. The rise of social media has fostered transparency in democratic processes. Similarly, an inclusive accountability mechanism has also been established strengthened which makes corrupt officials accountable. "**Social media and government accountability**" is a journal which highlights the increased accountability mechanism due to social media. People can record videos of corrupt politicians engaging in corruption, which spread rapidly

through social media, resulting into constitutional accountability of culprits. It can therefore be said that transparency and accountability has enhanced in the 21st century.

All of these triumphs of democracy in the 21st century are primarily due to digitalization of democracy, which is empowered by evolution of social media. Social media has played a significant role in consolidating democracy through inclusive public participation and granting equal democratic rights.

"Twitter and the Rebirth of Citizen Journalism" explores how twitter and social media has contributed to consolidation of democracy. Digital democracy embodies the essence of democratic values.

However, on the other hand, critics argue that the 21st century has given rise to unprecedented challenges that have utterly weakened democracy. One of the key concerns is the rise of 'scorched democracies' in the developing parts of the world. It is a form of governance which

is democratic on the paper, but in practice, an ~~dict~~ autocratic governance which neglects democratic rights. Owing to this, people have lost their trust in democracy. This erosion of trust in democratic values by the masses has raised ideological threats to democracy.

Another key challenge of democracy that emerged in the 21st century is the massive increase in public propaganda and mass manipulation. This challenge is exacerbated by social media, in which populist ideologies manipulate the masses for their own interests. This manipulation due to propaganda ~~exceeds~~ is against the democratic principles. The book, "Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media" substantiate the prevalence of mass manipulation in the current era. Mass manipulation has emerged as a key democratic challenge in the 21st century. -

Similarly, a critical and in-depth analysis on freedom of expression reflect that the 21st century has brought unparalleled

challenges to freedom of expression.

Although social media has entered freedom of expression, yet the governments have adjusted to the evolution, and resultantly increased surveillance on media. "The

Net DeJusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom" is a

classical book which explores how government and intelligent agencies have adapted to technological evolution, and the way they suppress freedom of expression and dissent.

Furthermore, the challenges to inclusive women participation still prevail in the 21st century.

Women's political participation and representation is globally low. The prevalence of patriarchal culture and traditional gender roles hinders women's ability to participate in electoral process. Women's exclusion from political process contributes to democratic deficits, in which a major segment of population is excluded from democratic process.

Although significant progress has been made to increase women's participation, yet the challenges prevail.

The chief concern for democracy in the 21st century is the rising hate speech and political polarization. The leverage to force expression has exacerbated hate speech. This is more relevant in heterogeneous societies, where hate speech also results in political polarization. According to a report by United Nations Human Rights Council in 2019, social media has exacerbated hate speech. The challenges of hate speech and political polarization adversely impact democracy.

All of these democratic challenges of the 21st century have been had a major contribution of social media. "Likewars: The Weaponization of Social Media" is a critical piece of literature which demonstrate the role of social media in exacerbating mass manipulation, public propaganda, hate speech, and social polarization. The policy makers are still working hard to address these growing challenges to consolidate democracy in the 21st century.

A comparative democratic analysis between the developed and developing countries present a dual ~~part~~ and a contrasting picture. Developed countries, like the US, the UK, France, Canada, and Germany have established democracies. On the other hand, developing countries, like Pakistan^{and} Bangladesh have controlled democracies. The difference between controlled and established democracy is that established democracies have constitutional supremacy, and laws of democracy which are enshrined in the constitution are implemented. Citizens in these established democracies have equal democratic right with complete rule of law. On the other hand, controlled democracies have democracy only at the surface level, implying having a constitution on the democratic principles. However, in practice, controlled democracy in governance presents a similar picture to that of autocratic governance, where fundamental rights are denied, power is concentrated, and even elections are controlled and manipulated.

If an analysis is built over Pakistan's democracy, it presents a sad picture of controlled democracy, having significant numbers of challenges with minimal triumphs. The country has been directly ruled by the military for more than 3 decades in the short history of 76 years. Political instability is a consistent phenomenon during civilian governments. Although the 21st century has given some hope to democracy, yet the contemporary picture for all proponents of democracy is nothing less of a night mare. The considerable triumphs of democracy in the 21st century for Pakistan are 18th amendment, freedom of media, and the rise of social media. However, despite of these short-lived triumphs, democracy has found a hard time to sustain its enduring influence. The military establishment has imposed censorship on media, curbed freedom of expression, actively involved in manipulation of elections, limited legislative and judicial powers, and fostered a culture of selective accountability.

In conclusion, it can be drawn upon that both triumphs and challenges of democracy in the 21st century are unprecedented. The crucial factor that has largely impacted democratic evolution is the phenomenon of digital democracy, primarily influenced by social media. Triumphs of democracy can be observed through inclusive public participation, dissent and freedom of expression, gender equality, and transparency and accountability. While challenges encompass mass manipulation, hate speech, and controlled democracies. Developed countries due to established democracies have democratic triumphs, while developing countries due to controlled democracies have more democratic challenges than triumphs. In a nutshell, the 21st century is marked by both democratic triumphs and challenges.